



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 1, 2013

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PHOENIX MAN ARRESTED ON FEDERAL CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian announced the arrest today of a Phoenix, New York man on federal child pornography charges.

A federal criminal complaint unsealed today charges RICHARD J. WATKINS, age 48, with knowingly distributing, receiving, and possessing child pornography via the Internet. The complaint alleges that in September of 2012 WATKINS made files depicting child pornography available to others on the internet by way of a file sharing program, and that an undercover police officer was able to obtain from WATKINS' computer video files depicting children engaged in sexually explicit conduct. The complaint further alleges that following the execution of a search warrant at WATKINS' Phoenix residence, the New York State Police found that WATKINS possessed hundreds of video files of child pornography on media seized from his residence.

WATKINS was arrested on the federal charges this morning, and made his initial appearance before Hon. Andrew T. Baxter, United States Magistrate Judge, who ordered him detained pending a hearing scheduled for Monday, May 6, 2013.

For his distribution and receipt of child pornography, WATKINS faces a mandatory minimum penalty of 5 years imprisonment, a maximum penalty of 20 years; For possessing child pornography his maximum potential sentence of imprisonment is 10 years. Each count carries with it a maximum fine of \$250,000, a required term of supervised release of at least 5 years, and up to life, and his registration as a sex offender.

The charges are merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

WATKINS' arrest is the result of an investigation by the New York State Police, and the United States Secret Service. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lisa Fletcher. WATKINS' prosecution by the United States Attorney's Office is part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.